Brazilian Arms Routed To Nicaraguan Contras

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.
Brazilian Arms Routed To Nicaraguan Contras

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, November 21, 1986

According to an Oct. 18 article by Brazilian daily, JORNAL DO BRASIL, Brazilian arms shipments valued at $3 million sold to a US company were diverted by the CIA to the Nicaraguan contras. Investigations by JORNAL reporters in Washington indicated the sales were made by the Empresa Brasileira Industria de Materiel Belico (IMBEL), to a Sherwood international export corporation. The latter is a large weapons dealer authorized by the US government, and with headquarters in Miami. The JORNAL article claimed the operation commenced in 1982, and has involved close to 15,000 weapons, mainly light assault rifles (FAL). Acquisitions of the US company were immediately transferred to the CIA without prior unloading in US territory. Documents studied by JORNAL reporters, available in Washington, indicated that the weapons were shipped from Brazilian ports direct to Honduras and El Salvador where they were delivered to the contras. The article also pointed out that since the US Congress prohibited military aid to the contras, private US companies have been frequently used as channels to acquire armaments destined for the same. Indian manufacturers of rifles and other light weaponry suitable for guerrilla warfare have also been involved in similar transactions with US companies. Brasilia authorizes weapons sales, but does not monitor deliveries. Brazil's arms industry ranks fifth in the world in the production and sale of weapons. IMBEL is linked to the Brazilian army, and is authorized to employ Belgian technology in light arms manufacture. The JORNAL reported that up to 40,000 Brazilian manufactured rifles have ended up in contra hands. (Basic data from EXCELSIOR, 10/29/86:27)

-- End --